



**William Wallace Coull**  
**Died in line of duty on 5 February 1918**

**Description of Act**

It was bitterly cold and windy on the afternoon of February 5, 1918, when call firefighter W. Wallace Coull carried a line of hose into the burning tenement house at 35 Cleveland Street. He was about halfway up a stairway when he shouted that he didn't feel well and collapsed. Lieutenant William O. Lowe and other firefighters carried Coull to a nearby house at the corner of Cleveland Street and Sylvan Court. Coull died before the arrival of the physicians, Drs. Morrow and Whitaker. His death was attributed to over-exertion.

The fire started while plumbers were using torches to thaw out water pipes on the second floor of the tenement, occupied by Edward K. Powers. The fire spread into partitions, and driven by the high wind, spread rapidly through the upper part of the building. The Doucette family, occupants of the first floor, were able to evacuate their belongings before any serious damage resulted. Considerable damage was done to Mr. Powers' furniture and belongings. The whole roof was burned off, and the upper part of the building was gutted by the fire.

**Background**

W. Wallace Coull was a native of Gloucester and son of John and Elisa (Worth) Coull. He was employed for many years by the Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company as a Tea Agent. Over the last few years of his life, he conducted an ash-gathering business through which he was well-known in Gloucester. Coull joined the Fire Department in 1906 as was forty-two years old when he died, one of the oldest and most courageous men in the department. At the time of his death he was assigned to the auto-pump machine at the School Street house. Coull had lost his first wife, Nellie (Parsons) Coull, to typhoid fever a few years earlier; he and most of his family also suffered the effects of this disease for a long time. Although he recovered, his heart was weakened, and he never regained his former strength. He was a man of quiet habits who thoroughly appreciated a kindness and was universally liked.

Coull married his second wife, Madge (Brideson) Coull about a year before he died. He was survived by his widow and several children, the youngest being an infant of only a

few months, Roy Garland Coull. The other children were: Blanch Maud Coull, John Wallace Coull, Charles Henry Coull, George A.P. Coull, Robert H. Coull, and William E. Coull. He was survived by his mother, Elisa (Worth) Coull, a brother, Robert B. Coull, and three sisters: Mrs. N. Blanch, wife of John J. Sundberg; and Miss Lotta M. Jennie and Miss Grace E. Coull.

## **References**

*Gloucester Daily Times*, February 6, 1918, and personal communications with Mrs. Doris (Hildonen) Parsons of Gloucester, granddaughter of firefighter Coull.